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Promotion and protection of human rights

Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Belize and Japan: draft resolution

International Day of Sign Languages

The General Assembly,

Recognizing that the United Nations pursues multilingualism as a means of promoting, protecting and preserving the diversity of languages and cultures globally, thus contributing to the achievement of the goals of the United Nations as set out in Article 1 of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling its resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, by which it adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,[1] in particular article 27 thereof, concerning the rights of persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities,

Recalling also the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities,[2] which reinforces that sign languages are equal to spoken languages, and that States parties to the Convention undertake to recognize, accept and promote the use of sign languages,

Recalling further its resolutions 2 (I) of 1 February 1946, 2480 B (XXIII) of 21 December 1968, 42/207 C of 11 December 1987 and 50/11 of 2 November 1995 and other subsequent resolutions relating to multilingualism, including resolutions 67/292 of 24 July 2013, 68/307 of 10 September 2014, 69/96 A and B of 5 December 2014, 69/250 of 29 December 2014, 69/324 of 11 September 2015, 71/101 A and B of 6 December 2016, 71/262 and 71/263 of 23 December 2016, 71/288 of 24 May 2017, 71/314 of 19 July 2017 and 71/328 of 11 September 2017,

Affirming that ensuring and promoting the full realization of all linguistic human rights and fundamental freedoms is a critical prerequisite to the full realization of human rights for deaf people,

[1] See resolution 2200 A (XXI), annex.
[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2515, No. 44910.

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Aware that sign languages are fully fledged natural languages, structurally distinct from spoken languages, alongside which they coexist, and that, when working with deaf communities, the principle of "nothing about us without us" must be considered and integrated,

Recalling that early access to sign language and services in sign language, including quality education available in sign language, is vital to the growth and development of the deaf individual and critical to the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals,

Recognizing the importance of preserving sign languages as part of linguistic and cultural diversity,

1. *Decides* to designate 23 September as the International Day of Sign Languages, to be observed each year beginning in 2018;

2. *Invites* all Member States, relevant organizations of the United Nations system, other international organizations and civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, to observe the International Day of Sign Languages in an appropriate manner, in order to raise public awareness of sign languages;

3. *Encourages* Member States to take measures to raise awareness of sign languages throughout society, including at the family level;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to bring the present resolution to the attention of all Member States and organizations of the United Nations system;

5. *Stresses* that the cost of all activities that may arise from the implementation of the present resolution should be met from voluntary contributions.